



NEWS RELEASE--FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

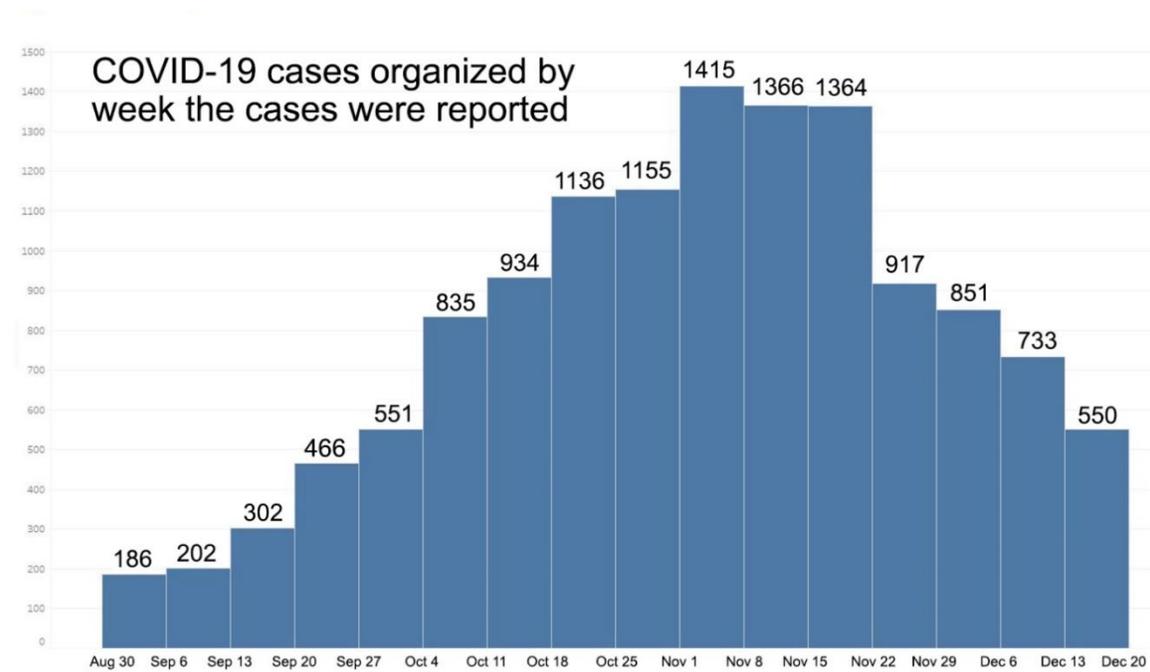
Date: December 22, 2020

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COVID-19 Update from Hospitals and Health District

SOUTH CENTRAL IDAHO – South Central Public Health District (SCPHD), Intermountain Cassia Regional Hospital, Minidoka Memorial Hospital, North Canyon Medical Center, and St. Luke’s Health System are joining together to thank residents who have helped slow the spread of disease in our communities and alleviate some of the pressure on our healthcare system.

Case rates in December have declined across most of the district, but are still high compared to summer and spring months.



Hospitals in South Central Idaho are also reporting improvement in their overall impact from COVID-19, including a reduced number of COVID-19 cases requiring hospitalization over the last two weeks and fewer staff members forced to stay home after exposure to the virus.

“It’s great to see our case numbers trending downward. Let’s keep it up!” said Josh Jensen, SCPHD Program Manager. “The first three weeks in December had more than three times the number of cases in September and earlier months. Obviously, we aren’t out of the woods yet but this shows that working together we can slow the spread of this disease and protect lives.”

Local hospitals warn the strain on emergency rooms is often higher around the holidays because of accidents, holiday stress, and winter conditions. It’s important to keep beds open and hospital staff available to handle the holiday patient needs. Watching our distance, wearing masks, and washing our hands are simple steps to keep case rates low and get our hospitals back to regular operating conditions.

Recently, South Central Idaho received their first shipment of COVID-19 vaccine and an additional shipment was sent directly to St. Luke’s Health system. The vaccine received in this initial shipment was not enough to cover the first tier of priority recipients, and SCPHD reminds residents it will take time before vaccination effectively slows the spread of COVID-19 in the community. In the meantime, public health and local hospitals continue to urge residents to find science-based information as they research the vaccine and choose actions that will slow the spread of disease until our community can be effectively immunized.

This holiday season, the best gift you can give to your loved ones and healthcare workers is to stay healthy.

Resources:

- Intermountain Cassia Regional Hospital website: www.intermountainhealthcare.org
- Minidoka Memorial Hospital website: www.minidokamemorial.com
- North Canyon Medical Center website: <https://www.northcanyon.org/>
- St. Luke’s Health System website: <https://www.stlukesonline.org/communities-and-locations/facilities/hospitals-and-medical-centers/st-lukes-magic-valley-medical-center>
- SCPHD COVID-19 website: <https://phd5.idaho.gov/coronavirus>
- State COVID-19 website: <https://coronavirus.idaho.gov/>
- Idaho Health and Welfare hotline for people feeling overwhelmed, isolated, or distressed because of COVID-19, available 24/7 at 888-330-3010.